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ENCYCLICAL LETTER.

CHARLES, Bishop of Rama, Vicar Apostolic of the Western District; WILLIAM, Bishop of Acanthos, Vicar Apostolic of the Northern District; and JOHN, Bishop of Centuria, Vicar Apostolic of the Southern District.
TO ALL THE FAITHFUL, CLERGY AND LAITY OF THOSE RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS.

WE think it necessary to lay before you the following Articles and Determinations.

1st, We are informed that the Catholic Committee have given in, or intends to give in, a Bill, containing an Oath, to be presented to Parliament, in order to be sanctioned by the Legislature, and the Oath to be tendered to the Catholics of this kingdom.

2^{dly}, The four Apostolical Vicars, by an Encyclical Letter dated *October 21, 1789*, condemned an Oath, proposed at that time to be presented to Parliament, and which oath they also declared unlawful to be taken. Their condemnation of that oath was confirmed by the Apostolic See, and sanctioned also by the Bishops of Ireland and Scotland.

3^{dly}, Some alteration has been made by the Catholic Committee in that condemned oath; but, as far as we have learned, of no moment; consequently the altered oath remains liable to the censure fixed on the former oath.

4^{thly}, The four Apostolical Vicars, in the above mentioned Encyclical Letter, declared, that, *None of the Faithful, Clergy or Laity, ought to take any new Oath, or sign any new Declaration, in Doctrinal matters, or subscribe any new Instrument wherein the Interests of Religion are concerned without the previous approbation of their respective Bishop, and they required submission to those Determinations.* The altered oath has not been approved by us, and therefore cannot be lawfully or conscientiously taken by any of the Faithful of our Districts.

5^{thly},

5thly, We further declare, that the Assembly of the Catholic Committee has no right or authority to determine on the lawfulness of Oaths, Declarations, or other Instruments whatsoever containing Doctrinal matters; but that this authority resides in the Bishops, they being, by Divine Institution, the Spiritual Governors in the Church of Christ, and the Guardians of Religion.

In consequence likewise of the preceding observations, we condemn, in the fullest manner, the attempt of offering to Parliament an Oath, including Doctrinal matters, to be there sanctioned, which has not been approved by us: and, if such attempt be made; we earnestly exhort the Catholics of our respective Districts to oppose it, and hinder its being carried into execution; and for that purpose to present a Protestation or Counter-Petition, or to adopt whatever other legal and prudent measure may be judged best.

Finally, we also declare that, conformably to the Letter written to the Catholic Committee by the four Apostolical Vicars, *October 21, 1789*, we totally disapprove of the Appellation of *Protesting Catholic Dissenters* given us in the Bill, and of three Provisoes therein contained, and expressed in the said letter of the four Apostolical Vicars.

We shall here conclude, with expressing to you our hopes, that you have rejected with detestation some late publications, and that you will beware of others which may appear hereafter. Of those, that have been published, some are schismatical, scandalous, inflammatory, and insulting to the Supreme Head of the Church, the Vicar of Jesus Christ.

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London, Jan. 19, 1791.

✦ Charles Ramaten, V. A.
✦ William Acanthen, V. A.
✦ John Centurien, V. A.

